

# Four Local Women Sail Solo

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By DAVID CUTLER

An adventurous foursome of Duxbury women called The Old Oars spent their February vacation sailing the waters of the Caribbean.

The four - Di Hunter, Betsy Stevens, Diane Hoyt and Happy Chapman - have been friends for years and share a love for sailing and the sea. The Oars of their moniker recalls their days of rowing together at the Duxbury Bay Maritime School and the Old... well, that refers to their ages which range from 74 to near 80.

They actually spent about a week in late February sailing around the Bahamas



**GHOST AT REST:** The 34-foot catamaran, Caesar's Ghost spends summers in Duxbury and winters in Hopetown, Bahamas.

aboard Di's 34-foot catamaran, called Caesar's Ghost, which she moors in Hopetown. The boat's summer home is in Duxbury but when the season ends here, Di sails and motors her (along the inland waterway) back to her winter berth in Hopetown.

So how did four, ah, veteran seawomen fare sailing by their lonesome in the Caribbean Sea?

"Just fine," said Betsy. "It was thrilling, relaxing, exciting. It was new. Di knew the area well and made it a comfortable place to be. She was a great hostess."

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**THE OLD OARS:** Happy Chapman (left) Diane Hoyt, Betsy Stevens and Di Hunter enjoy a respite from their sailing around the Bahamas aboard Di's 34-foot boat, Caesar's Ghost.

## Friends Sail Together

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Aside from getting in and out of an inflatable dinghy to go ashore, the ladies had no trouble navigating the waters of the Bahamas. They were careful and operated on the side of caution. They slept on board, cooked on board, did some snorkeling and enjoyed

a week of glorious island hopping. And they paid no attention to the occasional second glance from sailors aboard other craft which included crews of men or couples but never just four "Old Oars."

"It's not that women can't sail (by themselves) but many don't," said Betsy who has sailed for years. "And it's not

that old people can't sail but they don't."

This trip of a lifetime came together over dinner at the Winsor House last summer. Di proposed it and when she did, "We didn't pause for a moment," recalled Betsy.

Would you do it again? she was asked.

"In a heartbeat," she said.